Purley Partnership Federation

PURLEY NURSERY SCHOOL

Purley Nursery School
Achieving and growing together

Christ Church Primary School
Nurturing lifelong learners with God's guidance

Attendance Policy

Revised March 2026 , to be reviewed March 2027

Attendance Policy

1. Aims

We are committed to promoting school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school that are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation (key items are in red), which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

The Education Acts 1996 and 2002
The Children Act 1989

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
The Education and Inspections Act 2006
The Sentencing Act 2020
The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the schools have high aspirations for all pupils, but adapt processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole Federation and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the schools' processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the schools are struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The federation's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The federation's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Executive Headteacher and Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

The Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body has responsibility for school attendance.

3.2 The Executive Headteacher of Christ Church School and the Head of School of Purley Nursery

The Executive headteacher/Head of School are responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school/nursery
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school/nursery's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader/senior attendance champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school/nursery, and at Christ Church, developing appropriate reward systems for individuals and groups
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are currently the Executive Headteacher/Head of School.

3.4 The attendance officer at Christ Church, in conjunction with the Executive Headteacher

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Following up on any children who have not arrived for school, and for whom no reason for absence has been received
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school/nursery staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Executive headteacher/Head of School.
- Communicate with parents/carers about attendance concerns
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Executive headteacher/Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice-daily basis at Christ Church School.

At Purley Nursery school, a member of the Core staff is responsible for recording attendance once per session, this will be dependent on the child's age and class.

In all cases, this is done by using the correct codes (Appendix 1) and in a timely manner.

3.6 Office staff/Attendance officer

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Log any latecomers on the school system

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before the start of the school day on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide any necessary medical evidence, if required
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Executive Headteacher/Head of School

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

Christ Church School will take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Purley Nursery will take an attendance register once per session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The **Christ Church School** day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm.

- Christ Church School pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.30am. Children arriving between 8.55am and 9.30am will be marked as late (L code). Any child arriving after 9.30am, will be marked with a U code (arrived after the register had been closed).
- The register for the second session will be taken straight after lunchtime has ended for each year group.

For **Purley Nursery School**,

- The morning session starts at 8.30am and ends at 11:30am.
- The afternoon session starts at 12:30pm and ends at 3:30pm.
- For children accessing 30hours, their day starts at 9:30am and ends at 3:30pm.
- There will be a tolerance window of 10 mins at the start of each session, after which children will be marked as late (L code). Any child arriving more than 45mins after the start of their funded session will be marked with a U code (arrived after the register has been closed).

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am for Christ Church, or prior to the start of their child's session at Purley Nursery school.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence persists, the school/nursery may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence for future absences, such as a printout of medical records, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

At Purley Nursery, as the pupils are not of compulsory school age all absences will be recorded within the authorised absence attendance marks. However, to satisfy the requirement of the Local Authority Provider Agreement, and Ofsted expectations in relation to absence, any unplanned absence will be recorded with details of the absence.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

At **Christ Church School**, punctuality is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on duty in the playground each day, the office staff (children who are late must enter via the main office once the gates are closed) and class teachers.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (before 9.30am) will be marked as late, using the L code
- After the register has closed (after 9.30am) will be marked as absent, using the U code

At **Purley Nursery School**, punctuality is monitored at the start of each session by the Head of School, the Office Staff and teachers at the school entrances both to the Main Classroom and The Nest.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call or email the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact social services or police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels where there is cause for concern. Annual attendance is reported via the end-of-year report at Purley Nursery and reported termly at Christ Church. Parents will be contacted by letter each half term if their children's attendance is between 90% and 95%. At Christ Church School parents/carers will be required to have a phone or face-to-face meeting if attendance falls below 90% (persistent absenteeism) and there has not been considerable evidenced illness.

5. Leave of Absence requests

Requesting leave of absence

The Governors of Christ Church School and Purley Nursery School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

Parental Requests for Holiday during Term-time

Across the Federation Schools, it is important that parents inform the school of planned and unplanned absences in writing or via email.

At Christ Church School, permission for absence in term time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances where:

- the absence is due to serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other significant family events,
- evidence is provided by an employer that annual leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without significant consequence.

Each request for holiday absence is considered individually. It remains a discretionary power of the Executive Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence, however it is recommended that **no authorised absence is approved if a child's attendance is below 95% in the academic year.**

Where holidays are taken which do not fall into the "exceptional circumstances" category, these will be recorded on a child's attendance record as an "unauthorised absence".

Christ Church School follows the Croydon protocol regarding absences and fixed penalty notices will be sought if the necessary criteria has been met. Penalty notices can be issued for any child taking 10 sessions or more of unauthorised leave during term time without having to take into account the child's attendance prior to the period of leave. Prior to considering asking for a penalty notice to be applied, the school will consider the following:

- Extenuating circumstances for the absence (documentation, including medical proof, will be required)
- Establish there are no justified causes for the absence

The school will notify parents in writing if leave has been refused and, where necessary, will notify parents of the school's decision to request a penalty notice.

In the case that a pupil is absent without reason (no reason provided by the parent) and the school ascertains that the absence should have been unauthorised, the school will notify the parent in writing of its decision to request a penalty notice if necessary.

Penalty notice payments - This will be a fine of £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 day. Non-payment of penalty notice payments may result in prosecution.

Where the parents keep a child away for longer than agreed, then the extra time is also marked as unauthorised.
It follows that leave of absence for more than two weeks must be seen as exceptional. The School will explore with parents why such leave of absence is necessary and the Governing Body will make the final decision. Where such leave is sanctioned, it constitutes authorised absence.

At Purley Nursery School, parents are expected to complete an 'Application for Pupil Leave of Absence Form' to request leave. This has to be signed off by the Head of School prior to planned leave dates.

The School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024 state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above, the policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.

2. The request should be made in writing.

3. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to parents/carers within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued and/or prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996, by the London Borough of Croydon. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160.

6. Other Attendance matters

6.1 Suspension from school

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, if the student does not attend the provision, this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also the penalty notice section.

6.2 Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

6.3 Ten days' unauthorised absence and fifteen days attributed to illness

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Sickness returns: the school will provide the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

7. Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil moves too far from Christ Church School to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad, the parents inform the school of their new address and details of their new school. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

8. Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons.

9. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Executive headteacher/Head of School will contact the family in the first instance, to arrange a meeting, and to enquire about the reasons for absence. The school works with families on an individual basis where attendance is a cause for concern. Individual incentives may be used. Attendance contracts may be used to support a return to regular attendance. These contracts are an agreement between the school, parent/carer and pupil. Other external agencies may also be involved.

10. Attendance monitoring

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School and Attendance Officer monitor attendance on a daily basis, and complete regular reports which are shared with Governors.

10.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

10.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

10.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

10.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. Attendance contracts may be used to support a return to regular attendance. These contracts are an agreement between the school, parent/carer and pupil. Other external agencies may also be involved.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Where discussion and correspondence with the parents does not resolve the issue, the schools will seek support from outside agencies such as early help, social care or may recommend therapeutic intervention.

- In Christ Church School, following investigation, any unresolved issue could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444. This does not apply where poor attendance is due to illness.
- In Purley Nursery School, where the child has not attended for a sustained period of approximately 4 weeks, and no contact has been made to account for the absence, the place will be withdrawn.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the Executive headteacher/Head of School, but recommended to be reviewed on an annual basis. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

12. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix

Appendix 1: attendance codes

Code	Meaning	Type
/ \	Present at the school / morning \ afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework	Present Mark
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance (see next page for breakdown)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registered at another school - Attending Alternative Provision at another school site - Hospital education - Education at a secure / residential site - Off-site direction / managed move	Present Mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
JI	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority - Home Tutoring - Approved Framework for Alternative Provision - Blended Learning	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical or dental appointment	Authorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark

O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not expected to attend
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination.	Authorised Absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an Educational Trip or Visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not expected to attend
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Not expected to attend
#	Planned whole school closure	Not expected to attend

Code	Meaning	Type
The Y code: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause, is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not expected to attend
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not expected to attend
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes.	Not expected to attend
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating.	Not expected to attend
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.	Not expected to attend
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	Not expected to attend
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.	Not expected to attend

The C code: Authorised Absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised Absence